Increase in the export of domestic steel

†1933. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been an increase to the tune of 31.6 per cent in the export of domestic steel during the first nine months (April—December) of the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to fix the target of 50 per cent increase in the export during the next financial year; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) and (b) The exports of finished steel by the main and secondary producers during the period from April 1999 to December 1999 has been 16.25 lakh tonnes which is 28.9% higher than the exports made during the corresponding period last year. In addition, the export of semis and pig iron during April 1999 to December 1999 has been 3.65 lakh tonnes as against 3.55 lakh tonnes exported during April 1998 to December 1998.

(c) and (d) No export targets are fixed by the Government. The producers decide the export targets individually keeping in view their production plan, market demand for their products and other relevant factors.

Revival Plan for IISCO

1934. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "SAIL reforms put IISCO revival plan in Limbo", as reported in the Statesman, dated 21st February, 2000;

(b) whether the revival plan of the IISCO with a Russian firm has been freezed by Government;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the details of other strategies now Government propose to formulate to revive the ailing IISCO in a time-frame?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does Not arise.

(d) Government has allowed SAIL to have a minority share holding in any Joint Venture contemplated for revival of Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO). An action plan for conversion of IISCO into a Joint Venture has not yet been finalised.

VRS in steel plants

1935. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Voluntary Retirement Scheme has been introduced in the public sector steel plants;

(b) if so, since when and the amount spent by the Steel Authority of India Limited on paying compensation and making other payments to its employees under VRS;

(c) the number of employees in different steel plants who have accepted VRS till October, 1999 i.e. the closure of VRS; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) Voluntary Retirement Schemes (VRS) have been implemented in the steel plants under Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) during 1986—93, 1998 and 1999. No VRS has been implemented in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.

(b) to (d) The scheme of VRS operation by SAIL during 1998 and 1999 was on deferred payment basis. Number of persons, plant wise, who availed the VRS is in the Statement I. (*See* below).

Information about number of persons who availed VRS during 1986 to 1993 is given in the Statement-II. (*See* below). Information on the amount spent on payments under VRS will be collected and laid on the Table of the House.